

SECTION 4 - PROJECT SUMMARY

The city of Lowell should be commended for being proactive in responding to growth pressures and for valuing their remaining natural resources. As growth pressures, legislation, and economics force cities and towns in Massachusetts to assess current development strategies and regulations, smart growth is a term at the forefront of their agendas. As debates about urban sprawl ensue, smart growth initiatives are promoting redevelopment, maximizing existing infrastructure and emphasizing open space preservation. Land use planning is a tool that should be used to maximize development potential and establish a framework for successful communities.



Illustrative rendering at southern end of site depicting various uses – light industrial building on the left and live/work units on the right. Street is narrow with parking along one side and street trees help to buffer pedestrians from traffic. Visual and textural surface at road crossings also promote safe pedestrian use.





Illustrative rendering through town house spine at middle of site. A tree-lined pedestrian path leads to open space at the top of the slope adjacent to the river. Front porches, trees and foundation plantings minimize the scale of the buildings and reinforce the pedestrian-only corridor.

The city of Lowell has undertaken this specific planning effort in direct response to the need for community-based initiatives that will promote friendly, walkable communities with neighborhood-scale amenities. Several analysis and planning efforts have led to the resulting recommendations – in plan and text and through zoning and design guidelines. These recommendations have been crafted to be flexible in application, yet rigid in intent. The city can build upon this framework to develop intelligent planning tools that will address infrastructure, access, economic development, housing, recreation and open space well into the future.

The design for the Final Redevelopment Plan provides a visual aid for how the zoning recommendations can be applied to a specific site with a unique set of limitations. This plan should be used to generate dialogue when the city is presented with plans for new parcel development or for redevelopment of existing parcels. The scale of this plan, and of the New Urbanism principles in general, is broader-based and encourages moving beyond street-level



growth to blocks, neighborhoods and geographic regions. The underlying intent is to foster growth in a manner that promotes wholesale planning to achieve livable communities where people enjoy a quality of life that embraces various income levels, cultures and lifestyles while providing a stable economic base for the entire community.



Illustrative rendering from across river at northern end of site. Shows trail along the top of the slope with open space areas and pedestrian bridge river crossing. Apartments and town homes are shown in the background with kayakers enjoying the Concord River in the foreground.

